



# CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

## 24-HOUR REPORT

**19 MAY 2021**

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### (U) CALIFORNIA

#### (U) Los Angeles – Homeless Man Suspected as Arsonist in Palisades Fire

(U) A homeless man was identified on Tuesday as the person who allegedly started Southern California's Palisades Fire, which has burned more than 1,100 acres, threatened hundreds of homes, and prompted the evacuation of about 1,000 people. The suspect, Ramon Santos Rodriguez, 48, allegedly used an incendiary device to ignite the blaze in the Santa Monica Mountains of Los Angeles County, according to the Los Angeles Fire Department Arson Counterterrorism Section. Rodriguez was arrested just before 11 a.m. on Sunday when he emerged from the burned brush near the spot where the blaze began and was spotted by a private security officer, who alerted police, officials said. He was suffering from smoke inhalation at the time he was taken into custody and he was treated at a hospital, authorities said.

SOURCE: 18 May 2021 [ABC News](#)

#### (U) Los Angeles – DMV Workers Accepted Bribes in California Offices, Federal Prosecutors Say

(U) California Department of Motor Vehicle employees at two Los Angeles-area offices took thousands-of-dollars in bribes to approve driver licenses, federal prosecutors said. The extent of the corruption is not clear because many of the court records are under seal, but a former manager of the DMV's Lincoln Park office, in LA's Lincoln Heights area, is the fifth ex-employee in recent months to admit to a role in the scheme. Jovana Tameka Nettles, 44, pleaded guilty Monday to mail fraud for taking cash bribes and admitted taking part in a conspiracy of DMV employees who approved licenses for unqualified drivers. A DMV investigator helped uncover the conspiracy when she spotted suspicious patterns in application processing.

SOURCE: 18 May 2021, [AP](#)

#### (U) Visalia – Some Visalia Unified School District Systems Offline Following Cyber Attack

(U) On Tuesday, the Visalia Unified School District announced that they were victims of a ransomware attack, saying it impacted the operations of some school district IT systems. District officials said they were working with a cybersecurity company to respond to the attack and restore the systems as soon as possible. The district did not specify what kind of data was taken and is not releasing any details about the hackers' demands.

SOURCE: 18 May 2021, [ABC 30 Fresno](#)

### (U) NATIONAL

#### (U) Colorado – FBI Investigates Asian American Teen's Death as Hate Crime

(U) Denver – The FBI has revealed that it is investigating the 2017 death of an Asian American teenager in Colorado as a possible hate crime, a grisly case in which local authorities said she was purposefully set on fire and burned alive in her family's mountain community home. The FBI said in a statement that it was looking into the death of Maggie Long, 17, as a "hate crime matter." Long's death was ruled a homicide, and authorities later released composite sketches of at least three men they believed were involved in her death. No arrests have been made.

SOURCE: 18 May 2021, [KCTV-5](#)

## UNCLASSIFIED

### **(U) Ohio – ISIS Supporter Pleads Guilty in Attempted Attack on Jewish Synagogue**

(U) Toledo – A Northwest Ohio resident admitted Tuesday that he planned to carry out a mass shooting at a synagogue to show his allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS). Damon Joseph, 23, of Holland pleaded guilty in US District Court in Toledo to charges of attempting to provide material support to a terrorist organization and attempting to commit a hate crime. He faces 20-years in prison and will be sentenced on 14 September. Authorities arrested Joseph on 7 December 2018, moments after he grabbed a duffel bag that contained two semi-automatic rifles from an undercover FBI agent's car. Unbeknownst to Joseph, agents disabled the weapons.

SOURCE: 18 May 2021, [Cleveland.com](https://www.cleveland.com)

### **(U) INTERNATIONAL**

### **(U) Belgium – Authorities Search for Armed and Suspected Right-Wing Extremist**

(U) Limburg – On 18 May, Belgian police announced that they are looking for a suspect identified only by the initials JC, who is a military member and armed with multiple weapons, including a possible rocket launcher and is targeting a Belgian virologist. Federal prosecutors affirmed there were indications that the suspect JC posed a serious threat of violent action and noted he previously made threats against the Belgian virologist. The suspect reportedly left a farewell letter indicating he was "going into the resistance and may not survive." In addition, he was previously under surveillance by military intelligence because of his anti-immigration views.

SOURCE: 18 May 2021, [Brussels Times](https://www.brusselstimes.com)

### **(U) Israel – US Embassy Warns of 'Marked Increase in Violence' Throughout Israel, West Bank**

(U) The US Embassy in Israel issued a security alert on Tuesday warning of a marked increase in violence throughout Israel and the West Bank. The advisory also stated that rockets continue to impact the Gaza periphery and areas across southern and central Israel. The Israel Defense Forces reported that barrages of rockets were fired at Israel for the ninth consecutive night. Until further notice, US government employees and their family members have been advised to limit personal travel to the city in which they reside, to remain close to home or close to a bomb shelter during daylight hours, and to remain indoors in their residences from 8:00 p.m. until 5:00 a.m. local time the next day.

SOURCE: 18 May 2021, [US Embassy](https://www.usembassy.gov)

### **(U) Venezuela – Ex-FARC Leader Jesus Santrich Killed in Venezuela, Dissident Group Says**

(U) Caracas – Jesus Santrich, one of the most prominent leaders of a group of Colombia's former FARC rebels who reject a 2016 peace accord, has been killed in Venezuela in an operation by Colombia's military, former FARC dissidents said late on Tuesday. Santrich was traveling by a truck in Venezuela when it was attacked by Colombian commandos of the dissident group, which calls itself the Segunda Marquetalia. Santrich, who initially backed the 2016 peace deal, was wanted by the US on drug trafficking charges and had long been thought to be based in Venezuela.

SOURCE: 18 May 2021, [Reuters](https://www.reuters.com)

**(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.**

**(U) FOR QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE EMAIL [STAC@CALOES.CA.GOV](mailto:STAC@CALOES.CA.GOV), OR CALL 916-636-2900.**

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